

Child Support Advisory Board
MINUTES
May 20, 2004

Present

1st District, George Gliaudys, Jr., Esq.
1st District, Jane Preece, Esq.
2nd District, Paula Leftwich
2nd District, John Murrell
3rd District, Betty Nordwind, Esq.
3rd District, Lucy T. Eisenberg, Esq.
4th District, Jean F. Cohen
4th District, Maria Tortorelli
5th District, Reginald Brass
5th District, Susan Speir

Children and Family Services,
Patti Griffin
Child Support Services Department,
Steven Golightly
CA Department of Child Support Services,
Victor Rea for Nancy Stone
Superior Court, David Jetton

Guests

Lori Cruz, CSSD
Gail Juiliano, CSSD
Carol Mentell, CSSD
Jenny Skoble, Advocate

Absent

Chief Information Office,
Jon Fullinwider
Department of Public Social Services,
Margaret Quinn
Franchise Tax Board, Debbie Strong

Staff Support

B. Eugene Romig, Board of Supervisors
Peter Papadakis, Board of Supervisors
Audra Galang, Board of Supervisors

CALL TO ORDER

In the absence of a quorum, *Chairperson Eisenberg* called a meeting of the Committee of the Whole to order at 9:30 a.m.; a quorum was confirmed at 10:00 a.m. and the Commission meeting was called to order.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO INCLUDE: BUDGET STATUS

Steven Golightly, Chief Deputy, CSSD, reported the following:

- The Work Group has finalized recommended changes to be forwarded to the State Legislature;

- On May 5, 2004, Assemblywoman Goldberg spoke before the Assembly Budget Committee and requested \$3.2 million for Los Angeles County to address inequities; the Committee approved the request; Local 660 is to be commended for alerting local and state officials of funding issues and the work performed by CSSD;
- Layoffs (40) and reductions (30) are anticipated on July 1, 2004; frozen positions and vacancies are not being filled;
- Continue to pursue employee voluntary time off; anticipate a savings of about \$1.2 million;
- Have been notified recently that CSSD has incurred a \$1 million unanticipated County business cost for FY2004-05;
- Yesterday the Assembly Budget Committee rejected the state legislature's attempt to use CSSD welfare monies collected; and the payment due date for automation penalties has been postponed to September 2005;
- Continue to be on track to meet the state's measure of 46% in current support by September 2004; working closely with county courts on modifications and also on increasing collections;
- In January 1, 2004, a new law took effect prospectively in calculating wage assignment arrears; the new guidelines calculate 25% of the current order to determine the arrears, as opposed to 3% of the total order; the Consortia has implemented the new requirements as of April 2004;

Victor Rea, DCSS, offered Nancy Stone's apologies for not being present due to a family emergency.

- Have appointed Cheryl Spiller to fill the vacant Administrative Deputy position;
- The Town Hall Meeting is scheduled June 23, 2004, at the South Coast Botanical Gardens;
- Beginning internally to review the billing statements to make them more understandable; a work group will be assembled to study this issue and Chairperson Eisenberg has been asked to recommend CSAB members to assist in this effort;

Victor Rea reported the following:

- On May 11, 2004, the Allocation Committee met and discussed the regression analysis that had been completed, data that had been gathered, and issues on equity and adjustments on local costs in doing business; a synopsis was finalized yesterday and forwarded to work group members;
- The consensus is that a base level of funding will be maintained for each LCSA, and investments will be made above that base level that reflect return on investment agreements (performance improvements); no adjustments to current level of funding will be made, however, if additional funding is given to the state program it would probably be disbursed on the return of investment approach; and the next step is to discuss the synopsis with state legislative staff;

Mr. Golightly noted that Member Browning did not consent to the Committee's recommendation regarding the level of funding for Los Angeles County

- The DCSS is awaiting CSSD's plan in centralizing the intake process in the City of Commerce;

Mr. Golightly advised that the plan was forwarded to Nancy Stone, DCSS, and a formal response has not been received to date.

- A response to the February 6, 2004, letter by Member Browning is being prepared; and

Mr. Golightly reported that CSSD has gone ahead with initiatives and CSSD looks forward to reviewing any DCSS' recommendations.

- A response to the question on out-of-date data in FCR is forthcoming.

APPROVE MINUTES OF APRIL 15, 2004

On motion of Vice Chair Speir, seconded by Member Murrell and unanimously carried, the minutes of April 15, 2004 were approved with the following corrections:

Page 1, last paragraph, to include: "Ms. Watson indicated that there was a delay with the conversion of the order."; Page 2, Second paragraph, "Following discussion, ... to suspend ~~remove~~ the ..."; and Page 4, Report on Recommendations Regarding Centralizing Intake, third paragraph, "Centralizing Intake ~~Locate~~ would ...".

AGENDA ITEMS #7-9:

Mr. Golightly reported that DCSS has not provided a formal response regarding centralizing intake, and since then, staff, the SEIU and Local 660 have made recommendations regarding this proposal. Also, a work group will meet on June 22, 2004, to finalize an implementation plan that will be forwarded to Member Browning for his review; implementation could occur in October 2004.

In response to questions, Mr. Golightly indicated that the public will be able to access any CSSD public contact office and open a case, and he will report back to the CSAB regarding the safekeeping of documents processed and transferred to the centralized intake office.

The Audit Work Group is working on three objectives: establishing a better set of protocols on how CSSD accepts audits, how CSSD processes and completes the audit, and how information is released to affected parties. The Group will meet again on June 3, 2004, and final recommendations will be forwarded to Member Browning and copied to the CSAB.

There is a consensus to resume the Problem Identification Project as of June 2004, with some modifications. Gail Juiliano's staff will begin to scrutinize

recommendations to determine whether they should be forwarded and if they are systemic or individual complaints, and the work group will begin meeting monthly versus bi-weekly. Chairperson Eisenberg advised that the CSAB can also utilize the form to forward problems identified.

Copies of the memo provided to all CSSD staff dated April 30, 2004, is available today that clarifies policy regarding contact between CSSD staff and outside advocates. Staff has been instructed that all requests for case information originating with advocates are to be directed to the Ombudsman Office. If Carol Mentell's staff can not answer questions immediately, a contact in Lori Cruz's office will provide assistance to advocates. However, an attorney of record can continue to speak with the CSSD case attorney.

Jenny Skoble reported that her experience in receiving needed information from the offices mentioned has not been timely. In response to Member Nordwind, Ms. Cruz agreed to provide a list of contact attorneys and their e-mails within each Division by next Monday. Member Murrell suggested that a standard regarding this new process could be measured to improve access for advocates. Member Preece suggested that this new process limits access by advocates and is an attempt to eliminate criticism of CSSD. Mr. Golightly advised that centralizing data provided to advocates is in response to budget constraints and staff reductions, and is an attempt to improve quality assurance.

In response to Member Tortorelli, Mr. Golightly noted that Call Center staff are not prohibited from requesting information from a Division regarding case processing. Vice Chair Speir concurred with Member Preece and asked whether she and Member Nordwind as Committee Chairs are limited in accessing case data. Mr. Golightly agreed to report back regarding these and other questions raised.

Member Nordwind noted that advocates make few inquiries of CSSD staff. Chairperson Eisenberg requested that Mr. Golightly provide a written memo at next month's meeting regarding policy affecting attorney and advocate access. Member Gliaudys requested that the memo reference that access is not prohibited to CSAB members on non case specific data.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairperson Eisenberg reported that she worked with Mr. Golightly and staff to develop a public comment response protocol. The protocol provides that those making public comments regarding a case should be represented by an advocate from the CSAB or that an advocate will be appointed to represent him/her.

Following the meeting, the CSSD contact will seek clarification from the advocate regarding the complaint, a written response will be shared with the advocate prior to the CSAB meeting, and the CSSD contact will present a prepared report/response to the client case complaint at the following CSAB meeting.

Audra Guettler, CP, reported that she filed a non-welfare case prior to the birth of her child due to the fact that the NCP is from Mexico and had threatened to leave

the country. After contacting the CSSD on the 800 number she received a packet and completed it. In April 2003 she met with a worker in the Torrance office but was told that the NCP could not be served until her child was born. Ms. Guettler visited the Long Beach Court and was referred to Legal Aid. As a result, she was referred to SPUNK who initiated a private order through family court. The NCP was served, he defaulted, and it went to the default hearing and a judgment was obtained.

When her son was born CSSD staff contacted Ms. Guettler and informed her that the case would continue to be in effect until the order was forwarded to their office. There seemed to be confusion with two cases being worked on and she requested that the original case be closed. Also, following receipt of the order by the employer, the Call Center informed the employer at his request that her order did not have to be honored until a conversion was in effect. Further, in January 2004 a wage assignment was in effect and the NCP stopped working.

Ms. Guettler contacted the Call Center for a status update in March 2004, and she was informed that the NCP had filed paperwork to set-aside the action and that all enforcement had stopped until after the scheduled court date. Sue Speir contacted the CSSD and became aware that the NCP had filed a set-aside on the CSSD case that had been dismissed, not the family law paternity case. Consequently, a supervisor inputted very specific information regarding the former and latter case and noted that the recent case was still in effect. Also, Ms. Guettler later was called by a CSSD case worker who told her that he had explained the procedure to the NCP on filing a set-aside.

Ms. Guettler questioned whether the INS can be contacted regarding the refusal by the NCP to abide by the court order; the NCP is a permanent resident and a Mexican national. Also, when she contacted the case worker about two weeks ago to determine whether the NCP had had his drivers license revoked, she was informed that the NCP had made a child support payment and that action would not be taken. She explained that the money received was actually a tax intercept and the NCP currently owes about \$8 thousand in arrears.

Vice Chair Speir expressed concern regarding case note accuracy. In response to Chairperson Eisenberg, Ms. Guettler suggested that all enforcement tools be utilized and that case details not fall through the cracks.

Jennifer Bravo, CP, reported on her experience with the CSSD process. Ms. Bravo noted that she received an English child maintenance court order for two children, when her son was 19 years old and her daughter was 14 years old. The NCP had only made a few payments in two years. Ms. Bravo contacted the CSSD in November 2002 regarding her court order and was told that action could be in effect in about six weeks following her completion of the paperwork. In January 2003 she called and was told to call back, and she visited the Torrance office two times and was given the same information. In March 2003 the case worker advised that the case had been forwarded to an attorney, and she expressed concern on the lack of timeliness. In April 2003 she was informed that her son was being taken off the case due to reaching 18 years of age. In May 2003 she

received a letter that her case had been closed, and upon visiting the Torrance office she was informed that it had been closed by mistake and that action would not be taken until an original copy of the English court order was received.

Ms. Bravo obtained an original copy from the U.K. and after a few months, she contacted the Torrance office and was informed that they did not have the modification form or financial statement which had been originally sent to their office. Thereafter, she contacted various agencies and was referred to SPUNK in December 2003. The agency promptly forwarded an inquiry to the CSSD, and very shortly afterward Ms. Bravo was contacted by CSSD for the first time. The case worker appeared concerned, and in January 2004 Ms. Bravo was informed that her case had been assessed for arrears and a court date was scheduled. Within weeks Ms. Bravo received a check for \$184 from the NCP's unemployment benefits. SPUNK was able to assist her in the complicated process to enforce the order, obtained the \$118 order for her daughter, and highlighted her case and brought it to the surface to be processed.

The biggest issue in her experience since November 2002, is obtaining sufficient knowledge to overcome the barricade of workers in both the Call Center and the office who appear to have no ownership of her case and also appear to lack the ability to process the case through the system. Some employees were empathetic, however, they were not able to act on her case, and other employees seemed to not care at all. Ms. Bravo suggested that (1) all staff need clearly defined procedures, (2) staff training and monitoring, and (3) staff accountability to follow-up and contact the CP.

Ms. Bravo thanked the CSSD for their action and SPUNK's advocacy on her behalf. In response to Chairperson Eisenberg, Ms. Bravo noted that she was not advised of or referred to the Ombudsman Office.

Lawrence Hill, SEIU, CSSD, Allocation Committee Member, voiced his union's opposition to the Allocation Committee's final report. The Committee seems to have obtained data that would justify their ongoing allocations and disproportionate allocation to Los Angeles County. The union will lobby the state legislature regarding the need for increased funding to handle the case load that can not be effectively processed with current staffing levels. Funding for CSSD should not just be based on a return on investments, but rather based on the services provided.

REPORT ON TERESA HAMPTON CASE

John Allen, CSSD, reported that he was contacted by the case staff attorney that escrow has closed on the Teresa Hampton case. A lien was satisfied and the title company has issued a check on Tuesday to CSSD.

BPR: Report on best practices observed in other Counties

Julie Paik, Deputy Director, CSSD, distributed handouts on the BPR efforts to date and the Site Visit Summary (copy on file). The first quarter goal was to compare Los Angeles County operations to other counties, and obtain State and Federal

child support data, and the second quarter goal was to visit seven counties that the State had recommended. Ms. Paik briefly reviewed the Summary of Best Practices gathered from the site visits and noted that it does not include suggestions or ideas derived from the internal workgroups. All Departments expressed great concern about budget cuts and its impact on the ability to meet federal performance standards, and non-ARS counties were unconvinced that conversion to CASES was prudent. Also, a number of best practices were gleaned from the site visits and are included in the Summary as: Management Philosophy, Operations, Customer Service/Ombuds/State Hearings, QAPI, Legal/Court Issues, and Audit. The next step is to incorporate these good ideas, along with those of staff, into the BPR Team's recommendations.

Chairperson Eisenberg thanked Ms. Paik for her informative presentation.

FOLLOW-UP AUDIT ON LOCATE: Report on audit performed to follow-up on Auditor-Controller's recommendations

This agenda item was deferred to the next CSAB meeting.

WAGE ASSIGNMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Vice Chair Speir summarized the Wage Assignment Committee efforts to date (copy on file). The Committee has worked on the problem of reserved orders on non-functioning wage assignments and the inability to obtain modifications; management has now agreed to address this issue. Also, the new procedures in obtaining copies of the court orders from the welfare CP has been carried out by staff, and incomplete street address problems are being resolved.

REPORT ON NEW PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING COURT ORDERS

Member Jetton reported that the courts have recently implemented a new process that forwards a court order to CSSD headquarters instead of to the court trustee. Vice Chair Speir requested a staff update on whether this new process has been effective.

REVIEW AND DISCUSS PERFORMANCE MEASURES

In response to Chairperson Eisenberg, Gail Juiliano noted that the decrease of cases with orders have affected the percentage of paternity cases. The CSSD utilizes an internal measurement of child support cases that reflects the state measurement without including the entire state data base of paternity cases as a measurement. In response to Vice Chair Speir, Ms. Juiliano noted that more abandoned calls for April 2004 with less calls compared to April 2003 is due to a decrease in staff levels.

Following discussion, the CSAB agreed to omit Complaint Resolution statistics from prior years.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:49 a.m.